

Trade in America 29

A N
A D D R E S S
T O
EDMUND BURKE Esq.

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

1777

AND R. F. S.

EDMUND R. F. S.



[Price and selling of sixpence.]

A N
A D D R E S S

T O

EDMUND BURKE, Esq.

ON HIS LATE

L E T T E R

RELATIVE TO THE

A F F A I R S of A M E R I C A.

By EDWARD TOPHAM,

Cornet of his Majesty's Second Troop of Horse-Guards.

INDEED, IT IS A STRANGE DISPOSED TIME—
WHERE MEN DO CONSTRUE THINGS AFTER THEIR FASHION,
CLEAN FROM THE PURPOSE OF THE THINGS THEMSELVES.

SHAKESPEARE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. B E W, No. 28, Paternoster-Row.

MDCCLXXVII.

AND D. R. S.

EDMUND BURKE

ON HIS ESTATE

J. E. T. R.



RELATIVE TO THE

AFFAIRS OF AMERICA

BY EDWARD TOTHAM

Colonel of the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards

PRINTED BY A. STRANGE, IMPRINTED BY
W. H. & CO. STATIONERS, THRO' THEIR LONDON
PRINTERS, THE PRINTERS OF THE LONDON LITERARY

LONDON

Printed for J. B. W. No. 22, Pall Mall, New

MDCCLXXIV

L E T T E R, &c.

S I R,

IN addressing myself to you, I feel, I very sensibly feel, all the diffidence which a consciousness of your judgment, and a very humble opinion of my own, would naturally inspire. In entering on the field of Politics, I am aware of the difficulties which I have to encounter, and the Adversary with whom I am to engage; a field where you have long served, at least with abilities, and in which I am an undisciplined Volunteer. But the importance of some subjects naturally excites the attention of every one. I take the subject of the present American Rebellion to be of this nature; and the man, who, in such a cause, attempts to mislead or divide the passions of the Multitude, is in

B

some

some measure criminal. Your Friends on the other side of the Atlantic do not hesitate to pronounce, that those natives of America who (to use their own expression) "are so lost to Virtue as not to join in the common cause," deserve every punishment. Can, therefore, Mr. Burke, the avowed Partizan, the Imitator of so much Virtue, be desirous that the Government of this Country should not be unanimous, when her dearest interests are at stake, and are now deciding by the Sword? Should he blame that persecuting Zeal, which he pretends distinguishes this Nation, when he is permitted to publish his doctrines with impunity, and to inflame the Multitude with misrepresentations?

I do not pay you, Sir, too great a compliment, when I tell you, that there is something imposing in the name of BURKE, which, with the character you bear, should make you cautious of hazarding that name on every occasion, or of employing your abilities for the little purposes of a Party.

With this opinion of your understanding, I proceed to examine those Doctrines which you have given to the World, and which, in the Letter now before me, you are endeavouring to spread amongst your Constituents.

I know very well how seldom any arguments can tempt a Man to renounce his Party; I will, therefore, forego, though reluctantly, every idea of making you a Convert to my opinions;
and,

and, with all due deference to the Sheriffs of Bristol, who, you say, " have always expressed the most unqualified disapprobation of this war," I shall look upon those Gentlemen as lost. But, wise as *they* may be, there are other men, and those not the least respectable part of this Country, who, removed from immediate information, are still anxious of knowing what passes in the World, and who greedily embrace every opportunity of obtaining some acquaintance with the situation of our affairs; who think that the Press teems with nothing but the Truth, at least when such a name as that of *Burke* adorns the publication. When the opinions of such a Man go forth, and remaining unanswered by the more enlightened, are deemed by the Multitude to be unanswerable, the infection spreads wide, and the vitals of Public Strength become corrupted. From what source shall we draw our Seamen and our Soldiers, the bulwarks of our Country, if they believe the cause in which they go is disgraceful to themselves, and dishonourable to Britain? if that animating principle, the Love of their Country, which, superior to private considerations, tempts men to give up the pleasures of Domestic Life, is torn from them by designing Men, and the vile arts of Declamation? if they, the Sons of Freedom, can be persuaded that they are led forth only to forge chains for America, and to enslave their Brethren?

For

For these Men I enter the list: it is for their information I write. Their good sense will easily determine between Sophistry and simple Narrative; and when facts are fairly laid before them, they will pass an impartial determination.

Your objection, Sir, to what you term "a partial suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act," has not, in my opinion, all the weight which you seem to imagine. There never was a Country, in the Annals of History, that acted on the same terms against its Subjects in Rebellion, as when at war with a separate and independent Power; for this plain reason—Because it would perpetually promote Rebellion, if a desperate set of Men, the moment they took up arms against the legal Government of their Country, were considered as making war according to the common law of Nations. That the Americans are Subjects of England, their former subjection to it plainly demonstrates.—You allow them to be Rebels, and consequently we have a right to treat them as such. Whatever acts of seeming equality have passed between us and the Americans, have been matter of favour on our part, not of right on theirs. When we exchanged prisoners with them, it was not that we considered them as a separate nation, but from motives of necessary policy. Whatever law, therefore, co-operating with our arms, that could be framed to bring this Rebellion to the most speedy issue, was, in truth, the best and most compassionate. Of this nature

is

is the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, of which you complain. In its effects it is perfectly consonant to the common law of the land against Piracy, and an Act of Parliament of this nature was the only method of comprehending those, who, after having committed the most direct acts of Piracy, might endeavour to shelter themselves under the name of Rebellion. If we wish for proofs of this, it is well known, that, during the continuance of this unhappy war, a numerous sett of men, unlicensed by any species of hostile Justice whatever, and without direct authority from their own Powers, have purchased vessels on their own account, and gone out to sea with the hopes of paying themselves by their depredations. These men, though sheltered under the appearance of open and declared war, have converted to their own use alone the profits of such captures. I need not mention the various ships from the West Indies that have fallen into their hands, which they have plundered without any pretence of justice, and whose Owners they have treated in the vilest and most barbarous manner. I appeal to every one, whether Piracy is too harsh a name for such actions; or whether it is cruel that against these People the present Act of Parliament should be directed; that they might no longer have a pretence for concealing themselves under the general banner of Rebellion, or be exchanged as prisoners of war. However highly, Sir, you may think of the honour of Rebellion, you will allow,

that there is neither honour nor reputation attends the Men from whose Rebellion their Country receives no benefit; who look up to no Common Good; who fight not under the pretence even of Liberty; and whom, if they thus obtain a vile and precarious subsistence, no immediate advantage to America, no want of their assistance can keep on shore.

But those People “of mistaken Virtue,” for whom your feelings are so much interested, have experienced all the generosity of this Country, and been exchanged as prisoners of war; an act of favour which they had no right to expect from the English. But should even Mr. Washington himself, deserting his present honourable occupation, infest the sea for his own private emolument, and be taken in the offence, it will not be a matter of much consequence to his reputation, whether he suffers for his past or present transgressions; whether he is hanged as a Pirate, or executed as a Rebel: for with all the fashionable allowance for Rebellion, in my opinion, the title of Rebel is neither honourable nor meritorious—nor is the distinction worth contending for.

The second professed purpose of the Act, as you are pleased to say, is to detain for trial in England, those who shall commit High Treason in America. If you allow that the Americans are guilty of Treason, of which no one has any doubt, in what place are they to be tried—in England or America?

Suppose

Suppose a peace concluded between the two Countries, would Mr. Burke wish that the captives should be returned to America, to be tried by their own Countrymen, who had been equally criminal with the prisoner, and who consequently could not act with impartiality? They must, therefore, be tried in England; in that Country against which they committed the offence; who are the only Judges of their criminality; and where they would stand, at least, a fair chance in their trial by Jury, by the care that has been taken by yourself, and by your Party, to propagate principles so favourable to their cause.

But supposing, Sir, that this Suspension should be hung up, as probably it may be, and frequently has been, merely to strike terror, and to convince those who might be inclined to rebel, that they were liable to such punishment; can any thing be well more flagitious, first by your maxims to encourage them to Rebellion, and then to enforce the construction of this Act against them? Can you answer it to yourself, friend as you wish to be thought to the Liberties of America, to extort the definition of that Act which must be hostile to them, and instead of suffering Administration to exercise their compassion, to bring down upon the heads of the Americans the storm that might haply pass over them? Your analogy between former Rebellions in this Country and the present, is underserving of notice. The Power which could easily conquer and

secure

secure a few discontented Highlanders, must act on other principles against the vast Continent of America.

With your apologies for non-attendance in the House of Commons, I have nothing to do ; it may probably be necessary to make excuses to your Constituents, and may ensure your future seat ; but it is not altogether a fair argument to conclude, that those who are not convinced by what you have said, must be deaf to conviction. They have attentively listened to all the force of your rhetoric, and are not to blame if their sentiments do not coincide with your's. It must be confessed, however, that whether your endeavours have been animated with the spirit of Party, or the good of your Country, you have lost no rational opportunity of displaying them ; and when Parliament has been incorrigible, you publish your sentiments to the World in a manner the most zealous must approve, and the most seditious cannot condemn.

I will not, Sir, retrace the affecting picture which you draw of the manners of this Country, for I wish it to be forgotten. The Man who is truly a Patriot, would wish that such scenes were only imaginary ; and a wise Man would, at least, conceal our distresses, and not expose them to the World. Is it thus that Mr. Burke pays his court to Power ? Is he that gallant Lover who is to win the affections of his Mistress by exposing her failings ? by telling her of her defects, and
tearing

tearing away the veil that hides her imperfections, if such there are, by proclaiming them to the Public? I know, Sir, that it is the disingenuous but uniform custom of those out of office, to hold forth a picture of calamity which probably never existed, and to paint a long and melancholy scene of difficulties which, if true, it would be criminal to mention. But should the smallest foundation for such a display be no where to be found, it is then their method to have recourse to the tendency of measures they disapprove, to alarm the minds of the affrighted Populace with a pretended foresight of events that never can happen, and to point to the visionary forms of their own imagination.

There is not any thing, Sir, forgive me the expression, that can be more dishonest than such a proceeding: It is the poor artifice of a Quack, who, suggesting to the sick man's relations a pretended danger in his disease which he alone can cure, turns out the regular Physician: then sliding into his place, he makes the most of the time that is allowed him, and pilfers the helpless Patient without remorse.

In proceeding, Sir, in the displeasing task of examining your Letter, I shall think myself amply repaid for the trouble I may have, if I can communicate one ray of information to those dispassionate People for whom I write; if I can strip your arguments of those flowery wreaths that adorn them, and

discover their deformity. I appeal to your own good sense, and to that tolerating spirit which you profess, whether it is consistent with such a spirit to wish, That the experience of every evil may alone lead us to conviction; that the ruin of this Country may immediately ensue from an Act of Parliament, because it may possibly be prejudicial, because it may operate as a precedent for future encroachments upon Liberty, and may affect Posterity?—Tho' allowing it to be destructive, the force of it must terminate with the present Rebellion.

It is painful to a generous mind to observe how that rancour of Party which I have described, can banish every common sentiment of humanity, and lead a man to encourage animosities between those whose interests ought to be firmly united, whose dissensions must be fatal to this Country. Can any thing but this spirit induce the conciliating Mr. Burke to excite divisions between the English and German Troops, because the latter are Foreigners, and have behaved in a manner deserving every commendation? Is it worthy of your character to insult over the memory of those that are fallen in fighting our battles, and who have sacrificed their best blood to gain us advantages, which never could affect themselves? Were it probable to suppose that a language so unbecoming a man of honour could ever reach them, and that they could be weak enough to be affected by it, how fatally might it operate
against

against the interests of this Country? Were they, resentful of this usage, to forsake us in the day of battle, and deserting their standards, leave us to the enemy——would it have charms for Mr. Burke, that his Countrymen should pay the forfeiture of his misrepresentations in sufferings and captivity? For the honour of this Nation, I will hope that such sentiments will be forgotten; but should they be so unfortunate as to be remembered, I trust, Sir, that these Germans, however contemptibly you may think of them, will disregard such language: that there is a spirit of real valour amongst them that will lead them to discharge their duty as soldiers, to acquit themselves like men of honour in the cause in which they are embarked, and to spread the dignity of the English name over the rebellious Continent of America.

I shall not take notice of your predicted triumphs over us.— If the behaviour of the Americans has satisfied you, I am silent.——If you think they have fought like men who are fighting for every thing that is dear to them——if you think they have never been ashamed of, or renounced, their Cause——if you think they have preferred death to submission——be it so. I shall never reproach them with cowardice; I am too much a friend to this Country to wish that they may behave better.

You make it a subject of complaint, Sir, that with these unfortunate, these brave Americans, we war not only with the
Sword,

Sword, but with Laws recently made, and fabricated for the purpose. Could we indeed have foretold that such a Rebellion would ever have existed; that America, forgetting her dependance on this Country, would have raised her arm against the Parent that supported her; we might then have been prepared in every way either to prevent or chastise her ingratitude. Laws can only be made when occasion calls them forth. The unsuspecting confidence of England with some reason imagined, that such a crime would never have been perpetrated: Like the Law-givers of old, they flattered themselves that an offence so enormous as that of Parricide would never have existed in Society. The rapid progress, however, of human wickedness convinced them of their mistake;—and it was then found necessary to enact punishments adequate to the crime. But violent, Sir, as these laws against the Colonies may be in your opinion, their violence will cease, when they cease to deserve them. The gentle current of Government will soon return to its serenity. It was the torrent of American Rebellion that forced us to erect banks to resist its impetuosity.

I pass over your occasional abuses of the present Ministry, because, Sir, they are natural to your situation. It is, however, somewhat unfortunate that Mr. Burke should reprobate all abuse of men merely as Ministers, and then be guilty of what he condemns.

It

It shews to what we are to attribute those affected effusions of Patriotism, which seem to breathe the very spirit of Philanthropy. But so hard is the temper of these times, that we listen to professions of this sort with suspicion; and when once we detect a man deviating from his words, we deem that "*POLITICAL truth is not in him.*"

You would hold forth a melancholy picture of the tendency of these Acts against America, to alienate the affections of our Citizens and our kindred: That our severity will have the effect of dissolving all the social relations of life: "That mankind will pay the forfeit of our rashness; that the desolate Widow weeps tears of blood over our cruelties." But, Sir, will you deny that these severities, grievous as they may appear, are necessary?

In the act of Rebellion the ties of consanguinity are lost: In private life such an unnatural resistance may be forgiven, for the example operates within a narrow sphere; but in public life, such condescension is impossible. We may answer for ourselves, but we cannot for others: and in this case we are jointly to support our right in all its consequences—for of a submitting, humble, pliant acquiescence there is no end. We owe it to ourselves, to our Country, and to our Posterity, to establish the authority of the parent over the child, because it is the foundation of every good Government whatever. Had Brutus given way to the natural ties of affection, mothers might have filed

E

him

him an indulgent Parent; but Rome would have felt the bad example for ever.

Though the Americans urged, as you pretend, by our ill-usage, have been compelled to apply to France—it does not, in my opinion, lessen the offence. Were a child of Mr. Burke's to apply to his natural enemy for aid to resist his Father, I presume he would not think it any proof of the gentleness of his disposition, or that it entitled him the sooner to forgiveness. It is an easy thing to expatiate over the wide fields of declamation, and to call its flowers at pleasure; but the moment we bring home the application to ourselves, we are convinced of its absurdity. Were you inclined to examine every side with that accuracy which you certainly possess, you would find that the Americans can look even at Monarchy with no very great aversion, by offering, (as you say) to throw themselves into the arms of France. Had liberty been their only object, they never would have bartered it for defence; nor while they were complaining of the deprivations of Freedom from one quarter, would they voluntarily give it up in another.

Give me leave, Sir, proceeding along with your Letter, to offer some Objections to that great principle which you think so clear, and which you deliver in such decisive language,—“*That the disposition of the People of America is wholly averse to any other than a free Government.*” Without dwelling at this mo-

ment

ment on what kind of Government may be esteemed the most free, we may ask, whether it is only at this instant that this great, this vital principle has started forth into being, and whether it has only lain dormant for the uninterrupted space of a number of years? Have they not quietly submitted to our Government, and thought it perfect Freedom, till those troubled Spirits, those Catilines of the Age, who exist but in national troubles and distress, persuaded them that untried forms were better, and told them, that under the present Government of England they were no better than slaves? There is frequently in words something that degrades us for a moment in our own opinions, and leaves us not at liberty to examine on what basis such declarations are founded. The heat of parties was excited by degrees, and men, who to that moment had esteemed themselves perfectly free, began to think there was some reason in what was so frequently asserted, that the Freedom they felt was a limited permission, not a right, and which they were liable to be deprived of every moment. Animated with Zeal on one hand, and Suspicion on the other, they resolved to hazard something which might bring this opinion to the test. In every Country whatever, there are a thousand people who, having neither talents nor occupation, are ready, at the call of some desperate Innovator, to be the humble instruments of his Ambition: It is observable, that in the first commotions in America, not one
man

man of real property or good character was to be found. The progress of Contention has something that animates even the most indifferent, and forces them to be decided in their conduct. Such was the case in America. The popular cry increasing, made those who had formerly seen no right to complain, imagine that they were aggrieved; and men of reputation, who dared not to think for themselves, were resolved to shew they did not want apprehension, when so many were groaning under burthens, which they pretended were unable to be borne. When these Men were obtained, it was an easy thing to forward the views of those whom every possible change of Government could not alter for the worse; Men whose circumstances had nothing to fear from Fortune, and whose manners were never calculated for the peaceful duties of private life; Men, Sir, who hold forth in popular Assemblies; who can discolour Truth, can manage the Multitude by their Eloquence, and dress out Vice in the ornaments of Virtue. I repeat it, Sir, that when the harangues of such Men are tolerated in any Government whatever, it must be fatal; for while they are rioting in all the excesses of Licentiousness, they impress on the minds of the People the idea that they are Slaves. I am not wrong when I assert, and I appeal to every Man who has applied himself to American affairs to bear witness of my assertion, that Men of this character first laid the foundation of the present Rebellion

bellion in our Colonies. If in the natural progress of war their Towns have been depopulated, it is these Men who are to blame; if "the widow has wept in tears of blood" over her husband, it is the humanity of these Men which has occasioned it; if their fields have been laid waste, if Desolation stalks through the land, it is not to be charged to our cruelty, but to the tenderness of those Men who have talked loud for the welfare of America, and have been the pretended assertors of her Freedom.

But, Sir, if your friends the Americans were so anxious for a free Government, what mode of Government could be more perfectly free than that of England? Was it not the work of the best and wisest Men that ever existed, and who sacrificed their fortunes, their lives, every thing that was dear to them, to give it a stability; Men who had as sacred a regard for Liberty as your virtuous Americans; the Russels, Sidneys, Hampdens, Cokes: Names, at least, equal to those of Adams or of Hancock? Is not this Government which you depreciate, at this day the admiration of all other countries, who think it the perfection of human Freedom? Were the Americans desired to submit to any thing to which the natives of this Country did not submit? or could they fear any impositions which we should not have felt as well as themselves? Might they not safely have trusted to that Spirit of Independence which you yourself boast

so much of, and which would not have suffered the seeds of Tyranny to have taken root? That unsuspecting confidence which you say once subsisted between this Country and America, is certainly at an end; but it was not our Ministers that destroyed it. No, Sir; it was the Americans who first broke this confidence; when they were making preparations for future hostilities in the lap of Peace; when their troops were allowed to be disciplined within the walls of Boston, then occupied by our army.—Will you deny that these unsuspecting Americans had been gradually arraying themselves for war for a number of years? Did not they first begin the outrages that occasioned it, by opposing themselves to their Governors, destroying every remnant of legal Justice, and robbing the East India Merchants of their property? If this, Sir, is not destroying unsuspecting confidence, I know not what is. Were we then to enforce our laws, or would you have had us waited in patient humility for still further acts of violence, till we were incapable of resisting them? The Principles of Law may demand that we should not defend our own lives till the extremity of self-preservation makes it necessary; but national prudence and national honour require more immediate exertion. I repeat to you, Sir, it was the virtuous Americans who first learnt the secret of taking an unsuspected advantage of our confidence; who claimed a right from one exemption to exercise another; and whose whole conduct

was a dishonest series of illegal incroachments, from the repeal of the Stamp Act to their outrageous robbery at Boston. Their future manner of conducting the war has been of a piece with the commencement of it. The mean cruelty of destroying Centinels on their post, their lying in wait for individuals, their inhumanities exercised over them, and their last attempt to set fire to New-York, are proofs of a mean low barbarity unequalled in the History of Human Things. For the honour of our nature, I would impute these sad outrages to popular enthusiasm: but woe to those People who have seduced these unhappy wretches by their persuasions, who have held forth the deceitful advantages of Freedom, and who have raised for themselves an empty and momentary applause over the ruins of mankind.

I beg pardon for employing so much time in tracing over the scenes that have led to this unhappy war---for discussions of that kind are now too late. The Sword is already drawn, and cannot be sheathed without satisfaction. The Americans will probably now receive no terms from our hands, but concessions of what they demand, and what we cannot grant without indignity. I lament as much as you can do the consequences of War, but I do not date from it any material disadvantage to this Country. Peace and War seem the natural changes of the Political World; and, like the vicissitudes of seasons, contribute to its prosperity. It is the part of little minds, and not
of

of Mr. Burke, to be astonished at the appearances of the day : He should look forward to the moral good they may procure, and not be dazzled with the names of things, which are only good or bad in relation, and not so in reality. For my part, I own I see many honourable advantages that will arise to this Country from her conquest over America, and look forward to the happy prospect of days, which we may not live to see, but which our Posterity will enjoy after us. No reasonable Man will deny, that the present War is a contest for Empire, which fortunately for our glory has happened so soon. It may possibly be attended with partial disadvantages to the present times; but it will ultimately lead to our honour, and fix on a firm basis —*the British Government.*—Many brave men have fallen, and may still fall in supporting our rights; mothers, perhaps, may forget the advantages of their Country in lamenting over the loss of their children; our national expences may possibly for a time be enlarged, and our taxes increased; and selfish men may exclaim, that they have lost so much from the little gratifications of luxury: but the man of more elevated sentiments, who looks beyond the narrow precincts of the day, will never lament that he has contributed his part to the well-being of a Country which has protected him with her laws, and defended his property with her own. No soldier, I am confident, but will readily sacrifice his life, when it tends in one instance to confirm
the

the glory of his Country. Their alacrity has already proved their sentiments, and their opinion of the justice of that cause in which they go. The best families of this kingdom see, and rejoice in seeing their sons forward to distinguish themselves in again fixing the British Standard in America. They rejoice not because they imagine that any metaphysical points, or speculative advantages, are the object of this contest; but because the very being of this Country depends upon the issue; because were we meanly to retreat from this war, the lives which we might possibly save by such a conduct would not then be worth our care: the humble objects of pity to America, and the derision of the world. What future profits we may draw from our Colonies, will be best known when this war shall be at an end.

I could lay out ~~the~~ with the same ease that you could contradict them; but I dwell not upon the mere affirmation of any man who has an interest in the question. When those, who are now so loud in the liberties of America, shall have betaken themselves to France; and who preferring, as they say, death to imaginary slavery, shall retire before our arms, and entrench themselves in exile; when these men, having plundered a deluded people, shall fly with the fruits of their rapine, and laugh in some safe corner of the world at the folly of the Multitude;

the peaceful Empire of England will again be stretched over America: her inhabitants, having seen the effects of trusting to such men, will quietly submit to that parental authority which may probably forgive the returning penitent. At such a moment England will again resume her former glory. Her rights will again be established on a secure foundation. The disputable points will be done away; and if any acts of favour may be intended towards America, she can then perform them with dignity and liberality. Those insane people whom you describe as rejoicing in the conquest of America, rejoice on rational principles, because they are convinced that there is no other possible means of terminating the present war, of which every good man would wish to see the conclusion. Notwithstanding what you are pleased to assert, the people of America wish it likewise. The natural devastations of war are ~~always~~ terrible, but doubly so to those who are in the midst of them. Have not they who have already submitted to Government willingly renounced their errors? And if any have been weak and wicked enough to return to their offences, you will not, I presume, draw any argument of the justice of the cause itself from those who say every thing to all men, who violate their oaths, and disregard their faith--- from those who set at nought perjury and prostitution.

I beg

I beg pardon for detaining you so long on a subject where nothing that I can say will have any weight with you ; but if these pages, the production of an hasty hour, should lead to stop the poison of your opinions from infecting the middle rank of the people in this kingdom, I shall be satisfied. I again repeat it : It is for their information alone that I have slightly traced over measures that are already sufficiently known to many, but on which it may not be improper that they should determine. If I shall have been of any service to them, my humble ambition will be satisfied with the consciousness of having honestly delivered my opinion.

From Mr. Burke's arguments in favour of the Americans, I now turn to Mr. Burke himself, whom I am sorry to find engaged in the unworthy, fruitless office of keeping alive an expiring flame. Such an address, Sir, may be new to you ; but I wish it to make some impression on your mind. Should any terms that may displease you fall from my pen, I willingly disclaim any idea of personal offence ; but I shall not be deterred from giving you my sentiments in plainness and sincerity. Professing, as the only test of Virtue and of Honour, to attach yourself to a set of men of principle and reputation, you become the dupe of a Party who hope to rise by your abilities. They employ you upon every occasion, where it may be necessary to display you
either

either as a Speaker to Parliament, or as a Writer to your Constituents at Bristol. You forget, that while you hold forth your own Party as the most virtuous men in the Kingdom, you lead us to make comparisons, which probably may not be favourable either to them or to yourself; or even allowing them to be so, you make no account for the operation of the common passions of mankind, for the envy you must naturally excite in being admitted to so virtuous a Company. But I imagine that I shall not seem paradoxical in declaring, that all violent combinations of Virtue are seldom governed by that principle. The man who uniformly opposes a Minister is, generally speaking, in the wrong; for, with every allowance to the frailties common to every one, he who has the strongest obligations to be good, is most likely to be so. If, therefore, a Party, "*a Conservatory of Virtue*," associate together for the purpose of hunting down a Minister, and stedfastly persist in the chace, however they may deceive themselves or others by the specious names of Patriotism and Virtue, it is in reality a mark of neither. To stem such a torrent, few would accept the office of Minister, while the very name is an object of reproach, and which subjecting to censure the good equally with the bad, destroys the distinctions of Vice and Virtue. Such is the tendency of Party Spirit, which opposing itself to the acts of Government indiscriminately, does harm without intention,

intention, and good only by mistake. In those who possess it, it is one of the most degrading passions the mind can feel; for it swallows up each disinterested sentiment, and buries, in a low, poor struggle for places and for pensions, every generous wish for the welfare of our Country.

Whoever are the parts that compose such an union, is to me matter of indifference; I am not dazzled with the splendor of names; nor am I easily convinced, that there is any inherent charm in the name of *Wentworth* to bestow on honesty, or in the whole house of *Cavendish*, wise and placid as it may be, to inspire abilities.

As to yourself, Sir, though you possess a very uncommon share of understanding, you have unfortunately been led into the only line where that excellent understanding could be perverted and lost. Formed to examine men and things with metaphysical precision, the heat and violence of Parties have distracted your attention, and made you a florid Speaker without winning the passions, and a laboured Writer without convincing the understanding. That cloud of popular applause for which you have so unwisely sacrificed your time, raised by you, passes on to others of more elevated rank, and settles there, leaving you behind the humble and unnoticed instrument of their ambition.

H

In

In a situation so painful to men of real abilities, can the sensibility of Mr. Burke remain unaffected? Will he lend out his talents for the little purposes of his Friends, and bear to sacrifice the credit of his own character for their advancement?

Is there so mortifying a picture as that of a man who, possessing an heart sensible of feeling, finds sentiments propagated as his, of which he knows the absurdity, and writings given to the World, replete with the virulence of his Party, for which he alone feels the shame? This is a sad alteration, indeed, of the National Character! Servitude in the midst of Freedom!—What unwise purpose of interest, what humble gratification of ambition, can be adequate to such an exchange, when we voluntarily give up our freedom of mind, and that independance over which even a Tyrant has no right? Can the reputation of abilities alone compensate for the loss of every other better qualification? Or can Mr. B. imagine that he is employing those abilities in a reputable manner, when he is propagating the heated violence of Opposition, and spreading disaffection through every part of the kingdom?

Believe me, Sir, when I tell you, that whatever you may think of me, I am zealous for your Honour; and if I have said any mortifying things, they have proceeded from an honest regard to your real reputation. However flattering it may appear

pear to you to be thought a ready Speaker, experience must have informed you, that you are not heard with attention. The reason is plain——Because it is imagined that you are only the instructed deliverer of the sentiments of other men.—You will remember, that Demosthenes himself, for some time, was respected not more for his oratory than for the honesty of his principles—but the moment he became the known Partizan of Philip, his talents only made him the more contemptible. A memorable instance in how little estimation the highest abilities are held, when they are once discovered to be employed for private ends, and not for the PUBLIC GOOD !

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

EDWARD TOPHAM.

pear to you to be thought a ready speaker, experience must have
instructed you, that you are not heard with attention. The rea-
son is plain—Because it is imagined that you are only the in-
trusted deliverer of the sentiments of others.—You will
remember, that Jefferson himself, for some time, was re-
spected not more for his oratory than for the honesty of his
principles—but I doubt not he became the known Parliament
Phillip, his name only or the name of a compromise. A
memorable instance in the history of the highest abilities
are held, when they are employed to be employed
private ends, and not for the public good.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

EDWARD TOWHAM.